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Ch 90.1

Edmonds. Origin and progress of
the War between England and
China. 1841

Ch 90.1



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ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

The Writer

OF THE

W A R

BETWEEN

ENGLAND AND CHINA.

A Lecture;

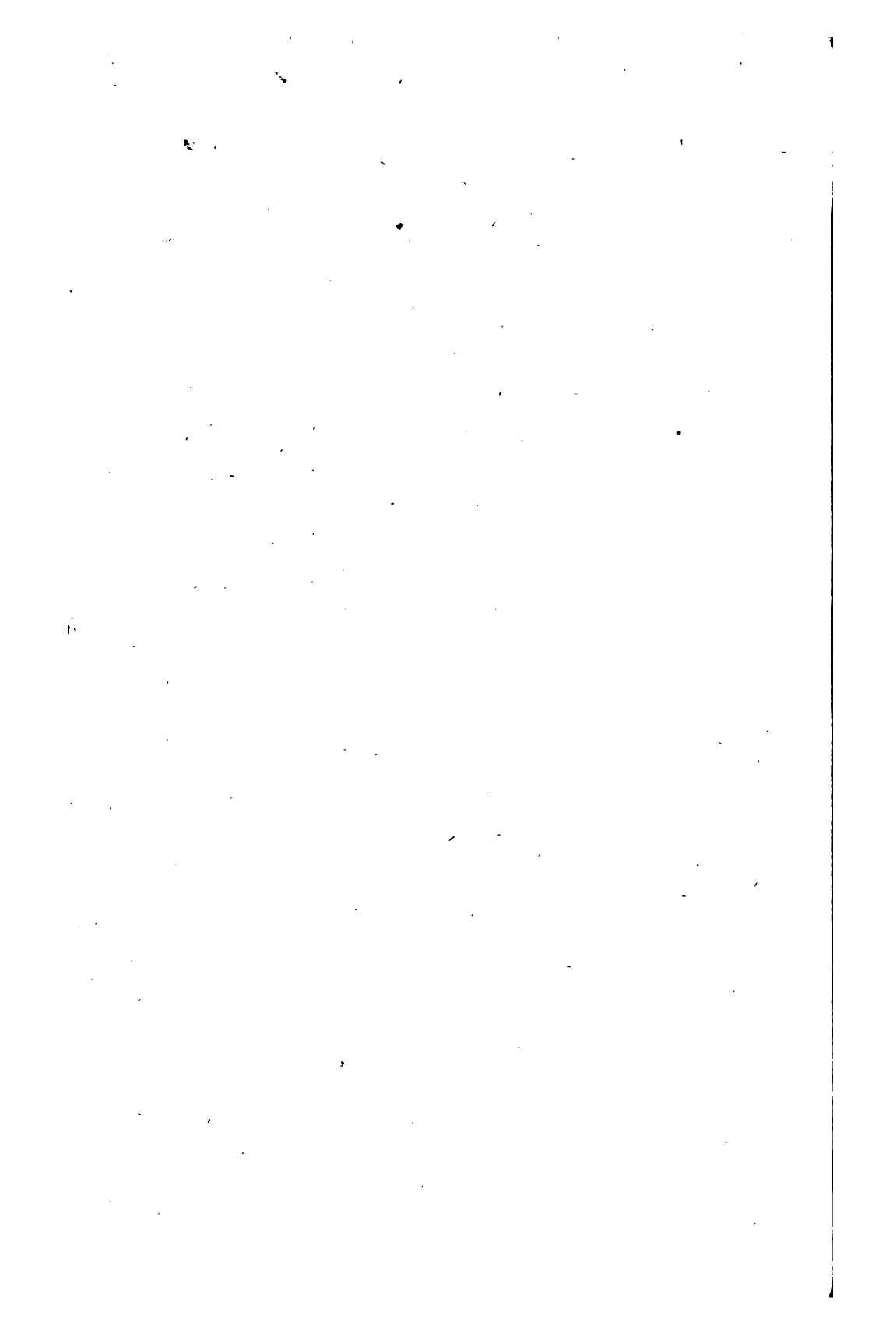
Delivered before the Newburgh Lyceum, Dec. 11, 1841..

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**BY JOHN W. EDMONDS.**  
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Published by the Lyceum.

NEW YORK :
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Hon. JOHN W. EDMONDS—

NEWBURGH, Dec. 13, 1841.

SIR:

The undersigned have been appointed by the Newburgh Lyceum, to request for publication a copy of your Address, delivered before that Institution, on Saturday evening, the 11th inst. In communicating this request, we should be doing injustice to our own feelings and the feelings of those we represent, should we not express our approbation of the sentiments contained in your Lecture, and the earnest desire that they may have a more extended influence.

Respectfully, we are your ob't servants,

JOHN J. MONELL,
HENRY D. PAINE,
P. P. HUNN,
A. J. PRIME,
M. V. B. FOWLER.

NEW YORK, Dec. 15, 1841.

GENTLEMEN:

I have received your favor of the 13th inst., requesting in behalf of the Lyceum, a copy of my Lecture for publication. In complying with your request, I deem it proper to repeat the remark which I made on the occasion of its delivery, that I had consulted English publications alone, and that I was indebted to them for every fact stated in my Lecture.

Be pleased to accept my thanks for the kind manner in which you have conveyed to me the wish of your Society, and believe me to be,

Very sincerely,

Your ob't servant,

J. W. EDMONDS.

To Messrs. John J. Monell, Henry D. Paine, }
P. P. Hunn, A. J. Prime, M. V. B. Fowler. }

LECTURE.



1541

There is no nation that now occupies a larger space in the public attention, than Great Britain: none, whose power can be recognized as more vast, or whose influence upon the world, whether for good or for ill, is more extensive. She boasts that her sails whiten every sea—that her flag waves in every clime—and that the sun, in the whole of its daily rounds, is hailed by the roll of her morning drum! After having subsidized all Europe, after having chained to a rock in the ocean, the greatest conqueror known to history, and after reposing in peace for nearly a quarter of a century, she has again drawn her sword and gone forth in her might, conquering and to conquer. No contest in which she can engage, can be devoid of interest to the world, but the interest in her present war upon China is greatly increased by the fact, that it is an attack by the most powerful, upon the most populous of nations, and for a purpose revolting every principle of justice and humanity.

It is extraordinary, that after an uninterrupted intercourse with the civilized world of 600 years, so little should be known (at this day) of the Chinese nation. Occupying 3,000,000 square miles;* with a population of more than 300,000,000 of inhabitants: traversed by

* In regard both to area and population, I have followed Gutzlaff, because he gives reasons for his statements, and enters into particulars, enumerating the provinces. The area is stated by Mr. Adams, in his Lecture before the Historical Society in Boston, to be 7,000,000 square miles; "about four times larger than the surface of the United States," but no authority for the statement is given. In Murray's Encyclopedia of Geography, the area is stated at 5,350,000 square miles, or one tenth of the whole land surface of the globe; and the population at 183,000,000, but no reasons are given for thus differing from prior accounts. Lord Macartney gave the population at 333,000,000, and the area at 1,298,000 square miles, and most of the modern Geographies and Gazetteers, gave the population at about 200,000,000.

some of the largest rivers in the world ; and a vast extent of sea coast ; possessing every variety of soil and climate ; exhibiting, in its wall of 1500 miles in length, the most stupendous work of human hands now extant ; with its hundreds of cities and myriads of villages, and its numerous canals, and other means of internal communication, extending over its whole surface, China may truly be ranked high in the scale of nations.

It is supposed by many that our accounts of the population of China are very much exaggerated, owing to the same spirit of bombast, which designates their Emperor as the "Son of Heaven," and his empire as "celestial." Gutzlaff, who is now, and for many years has been, a resident in that country, in his "Sketch of Chinese History," written at Canton in 1833, gives an account of the census and area of the different provinces, and expresses his belief that "the last imperial census"—from which he obtained his statement of 367,000,000 inhabitants—"is as near the truth as it can be ascertained." He says, also, that "those parts of the empire which he has visited are extremely populous,"—that "he has taken the trouble of examining some parts of the census, and numbering the houses of small districts, and has invariably found that the population was underrated." He says "the Chinese are naturally a very prolific people ; few only lead a single life ; early marriages, which seldom prove barren, are general throughout the empire. Government has always encouraged the matrimonial estate, and their ancient institutions devote a childless man to contempt." Hence he concludes that "the population must increase and multiply on a progressive scale. As the wants of the common people are so very few, and their habitual industry renders every barren spot tributary to them, we may easily conceive that so large a population can find the means of subsistence."

Their language contains 487 monosyllables, which by a change of intonation, are increased to over 1400. Their writing consists of more than 40,000 characters. Its copiousness no alphabetical language can imitate ; and the substitution of distinct characters for a simple alphabet, is a wonderful effort of human ingenuity.

In medicine, they have many remedies and numerous practitioners, all however teaching that the human body is composed of five elements, fire, water, metal, wood and earth, and that all disease is caused by a derangement of some of these parts.

In religion, they are idolaters. Polytheism is taught, but not the immortality of the soul. The school of Confucius does not deny

the existence of a Supreme Being, but inculcates the worship of heaven and earth, and the spirits of fire, of the hills, the rivers and the winds.

The sect of the Taou are gross idolaters, and pretend to possess the liquor of immortality and the mystery of alchymy, yet they die and die poor.

To these creeds is to be added Buddhism, which though of foreign origin, and opposed to the established religion of the nation, has yet most believers, because it teaches the best mode of arriving at their consummation of bliss—annihilation.

The Chinese claim for their nation an origin so ancient as to precede the creation of the world, as we are taught it, and their history gives an account of the reign of their Emperors for more than 2000 years before the birth of Christ.

The variety of their fruits and vegetables is by no means numerous, nor is the growth of horses and cattle much cultivated. Hence their labor is mainly manual and their food principally vegetable, consisting chiefly of rice.

Prone to imitate rather than invent, their manufactures are not numerous, but are brought to great perfection so far as they are undertaken. By means of their rivers and numerous canals, an active internal trade is carried on, but the great body of the people are believed to be engaged in agricultural pursuits. In every calling they are remarkable for their frugality and industry. But their great peculiarity consists in their being taught never to depart from the customs of their ancestors, and to live within and by themselves. Their government being patriarchal, filial piety is a virtue most cherished among them. To the memory of a son who gave himself a ransom to redeem his father from captivity among robbers, a monument was erected by the nation, and another to his wife, who, to save herself from violation in his presence, threw herself into his arms and perished by the same consuming fire. They are described as being generous, hospitable, and polite, and as believing that China occupies the whole earth, which is surrounded by water, in which are a few islands where barbarians are permitted by them to live.

Such is the people—thus simple and unobtrusive, in regard to whom the Christian world is now called upon to imitate the example of Constantine, and with the Cross upon our banner, to conquer and destroy—for the sake of humanity, to force into civilization at the point of the bayonet—and in the name of Him, who proclaim-

ed peace on earth and good will to man, to drive into Christianity, by the gleam of our sabres and the thunder of our artillery.

Regarded as one of the great family of nations, China has been remarkable for the tenacity with which she has adhered to her cardinal principle of non-intercourse with others. She has never aimed at foreign colonies. She has never sent forth her ships, *seeking* trade with other countries. She has never sought the aid of the mariner's compass to point her path to foreign mines, whence she could bear off her loads of gold and silver, at the expense of the lives of the natives whom she had conquered. She has never explored distant lands in search of a country into which she could pour the hordes of her redundant and starving population, to find a livelihood and a home, by sweeping from the land its unoffending proprietors. She has never sought to extend her commerce and increase her gains by forcing upon other people a poison which would corrupt their morals and destroy their happiness. Sufficient within herself for all purposes of comfort and self-preservation; extracting from her own soil, by her own industry, a supply of all the necessities of life; possessed of a government able to preserve order, and to maintain peace within her borders, she has sought her own happiness, without desiring foreign aid, and above all, without molesting other nations. Confident in the capacity of her own institutions to secure the prosperity of her people and the integrity of her empire, her government has been rigid in abstaining from all interference with the affairs of others, and in preventing the introduction into their country of foreign vices with foreign virtues—of foreign depravity with foreign arts.

Taught as American citizens are, that man is endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; having early learned, as we have, the lesson that it is the first duty of all governments to permit to each the pursuit of his own happiness in his own way, without intrusion from or molestation to others, we cannot but regard the conduct of the Chinese Empire toward the other members of the great family of nations, as governed by a kindred spirit. While other dynasties have arisen and flourished and fell, while other nations have with varied speed passed through the alternations of youth, manhood, and age, the adherence of the Chinese to this great principle, which is thus buried deep in the foundation of our prosperity, has caused century after century to rise upon their empire, flourishing in vigorous activity.

In an hour, which may yet be, if it be not already, fraught with immense evil to them, the Chinese so far relaxed from their exclusive policy as to permit a foreign trade.

The first knowledge which the European world had of China was derived from the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, in the 13th century. In the 15th century the Portuguese began to trade along the coast of China, and in the course of a few years, in reward for their services in driving off the pirates which infested the coast, received from the Chinese a grant of Macao, which they hold to this day. Other nations soon engaged in the trade, which is restricted by the laws of the empire to Canton, where foreigners are permitted to establish warehouses, called factories, and where their intercourse is carried on with a few Chinese, appointed for the purpose, denominated Hong Merchants.

1840
 Until within the last ten years, the trade between England and China was carried on by the East India Company, whose monopoly ceased in 1833. The English government has made repeated efforts to open diplomatic relations with the Celestial Empire, but without success. The Chinese government seemed to have been willing that the trade should continue, but declined any more intimate relations. With what justice can their right so to do be denied? To what code of either natural or national law are we to be referred, for the principle that would justify the permanent intrusion of a foreign agent upon our domicile, either national or individual, against our will, and in defiance of our repugnance to all intercourse? And the Divine law, while it does indeed teach us to love our neighbor as ourselves, inculcates the equally important duty of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. Would Great Britain tolerate such an intrusion upon her, and against her wishes? Could she be induced to yield to a demand for a friendly and intimate intercourse with a nation who should claim the right, in defiance of all her sanitary regulations, to introduce among her people the elements of their slow but certain destruction? No, not for a moment would she submit to such an indignity! She already complains of the humiliation she has endured in the refusal of the Chinese government to receive her ambassadors; and we are boldly told that "it is time this enormous outrage upon the rights of human nature, and upon the first principles of the rights of nations should cease." Yet she presents herself to the world at this moment in the attitude—and regarded in the most favorable aspect, it is neither more nor less than an attitude of demanding from China

that which is in truth an outrage upon the fundamental laws of her kingdom, and a violation of her customs, hallowed by the usage of ages. She may, perchance, triumph in the contest; for Providence, in its mysterious dispensations, does sometimes permit the ascendancy of might over right; but when she shall have succeeded—when China shall, like India, lay exhausted at her feet, and her gratified pride shall riot amid mouldering cities—let her first demand be to extinguish the fires and close the temple of the Chinese deity, **BUDDHA KWAN YIN**, lest, by profaning the sacred fame of this goddess of mercy, she may cause Him who is all mercy to remember against her offences, and the offences of her children.

But, whatever color may be given to the question in this country, the establishment of diplomatic relations does not seem to be the primary object of the British forces. It is true that it is sometimes alluded to, but the great end seems to be, to acquire territory, to open the trade to Canton and obtain indemnity for the Opium destroyed by the Chinese Government.

This was the immediate cause of the war and therefore, in tracing its origin and progress, deserves special notice at our hands.

Opium, which is a juice exuding from incisions made in the capsules or heads of ripe poppies, is prepared, in quantities, only in India, Persia and Turkey. The East India Company entered into treaties with some of the native states, ostensibly to reduce the cultivation of the plant, but took care to secure to themselves the surplus production. In 1816, Lord Moira's Government, in putting the internal trade in Opium under their Board of Trade, declared that its object in interfering in the traffic, "was more with a view to control the use of an article which is so prejudicial to the morals of the people and the interests of society, than with a desire of increasing the revenue." In the following year, the court of Directors say "their sanction was given to these measures, not with a view to revenue, but in the hope they will tend to restrain the use of this pernicious drug." And therefore the Company assumed to itself a monopoly of the traffic and derived a revenue from it. A Parliamentary Committee of investigation afterward "concluded it was not advisable to abandon so important a source of revenue: a duty upon Opium being a tax which falls principally *on the foreign consumers*," and made recommendations founded upon the ordinary commercial principle of increasing the profits, by extending the supply of the article.

The monopoly of the trade in the East India Company, being thus sanctioned by Parliament, it was conceived to be their duty to cause the supply to equal the demand, and although they were fully aware that the bulk of their Opium was smuggled into China, in violation of her laws, it was not for them to reduce the profits of their subjects, but to leave that country to take care of itself in regard to a trade which the Company had so truly stigmatised as "prejudicial to the morals of the people and the interests of society." The Company derived an income of a million a year from this source, and it would be too much to expect from this mercantile association that they would forego such an advantage for the sake of preserving the morals of the Chinese people, or to subserve the interests of Chinese society.

Opium is mentioned in a Chinese medical work, as early as 1600, as a remedy for dysentery and dejection of spirits, and its importation was therefore allowed. Its use, however, for purposes of intoxication continually increased until Kéén Lung, (whose reign commenced in 1736,) prohibited its introduction, and enacted severe laws against its use. In 1796, and again in 1800, laws still more severe were passed, so that the sale of the drug was punishable with death.

It is not surprising that the Chinese Government have resorted to severe measures for the suppression of the use of opium. In the language of a Chinese writer, "it exhausts the animal spirits; it impedes the business; it wastes the flesh; it dissipates the property; it renders the person ill-favored; it promotes licentiousness; it discloses secrets; it violates the laws; it attacks the vitals; it destroys life." Yet so inordinate is the passion among them, that with an entire consciousness of their approaching fate, with a full knowledge of the impending destruction of health and substance, they will sell their wives and children to procure the drug, and commit suicide in despair that the appetite cannot be gratified. So extensive was the evil, that from this cause the annual augmentation of population was reduced from three to one per cent. It extended over the whole empire—invaded even the imperial palace; and the mandarins, who were particularly charged with its suppression, were large consumers of it.

In 1780, the English first engaged in the opium trade with China, and since that time it has increased enormously. It was uniformly smuggled, in violation of the laws of the empire. Its conductors were English and India merchants, and under their supervision a

perfect system of contraband trade was established. The smuggling boats approached the ships at night, broke open the opium chests, threw the drug into bags and pushed for the shore, where bands were organized to receive it. Sometimes the boats would be loaded in the daytime, with mandarin boats alongside. In such cases, the operation was performed by the connivance of those officers, procured by bribery. At other times by force; for sometimes the smugglers would go in strong bands, and with arms put down all opposition, frequently at the expense of several lives. At first the trade was confined to the vicinity of Canton; but it gradually extended along the eastern coast, because in this mode the tax of the usual bribe to the mandarin could be avoided.

It is not known that this traffic was at any time carried on directly by the East India Company, and since the removal of its monopoly, it has augmented greatly, and become so public that the English newspapers at Calcutta boast of its "increased activity," and contain extracts from letters of the traders, in which they speak of the nefarious traffic in terms of great complacency.

The extent of this augmentation is shown by the following TABLE, (taken from the Canton Price Current,) showing the quantity and value of opium consumed in China during a period of nine years.

Season.	Chests.	Value.
1827-8.....	9,535.....	\$10,425,075
1828-9.....	13,132.....	12,533,105
1829-30.....	14,000.....	12,057,157
1830-1.....	18,760.....	12,904,263
1831-2.....	14,225.....	11,501,584
1832-3.....	23,603½.....	15,352,429
1833-4.....	21,250.....	14,006,605
1834-5.....	20,089.....	11,758,779
1835-6.....	26,018.....	17,106,903

And it is estimated, that in 1839, if the trade had not been interrupted, the quantity would have been 40,000 chests.

Now, as the chests average about 140 lbs. of opium each, the quantity actually consumed, in 1835-6, was 3,642,520 lbs.: and the quantity that would have been consumed in 1839, would have reached the enormous amount of 5,600,000 lbs! And this, re-prepared for Chinese use, would have produced 40,000,000 doses of the drug for that year!

The extent of this trade, and its illicit character, were not unknown to the British Government. The restraint of its East India Company had been removed, and not the slightest effort seems to

have been made by any of the officers of that Government, to compel their people to obey the laws of the nation with whom they were trading.* The right and the duty of the Chinese Government, under this state of things, were as plain as the meridian sun. Foreigners were engaged on her soil, in violating her laws; what should withhold the punishment due their offences? They were forcing upon the people their deadly drug, and to increase their paltry gains, were aiming fatal blows at human life and happiness; what was there to impair the duty of immediate seizure and destruction?

There is no nation on earth, where laws are known, and order prevails, where this right and duty are not clearly recognised, and in no place more distinctly or more frequently enforced than in the British Isles.

The Chinese Government had therefore the clear right, at once to seize the contraband article and punish the offenders. Instead, however, of administering its justice in a manner, the promptness of which might be construed into harshness, they proceeded in the spirit of mildness which so eminently characterises all their conduct.

In 1834 they caused notice to be given to the English merchants that "if one vessel smuggled, all vessels would be immediately prohibited from trading." So little attention was paid to this, that the trade increased the next year nearly 6,000 chests.

Two years afterward a high officer was sent from Peking to enforce the laws. "His coming and object were long pre-announced; the intention was evidently not to take foreigners by surprise." Six weeks before his arrival, the Governor of Canton, in an edict, announced his appointment, and urged upon the foreign merchants to "send back to its country every one of the opium ships." To show they were in earnest they executed two of the Chinese opium dealers for the offence, and that too in front of the English factories: that the warning might go home to those it was designed for. The High Commissioner, on his arrival, addressed an edict to the foreigners, in which he reminded them that the natives were liable to the

* The conduct of the Russian Government in the emergency, was quite different. As soon as it was ascertained that it was the wish of the Chinese Government to suppress the opium trade, it issued its orders to its eastern frontiers, strictly prohibiting the introduction of the article through the Russian territory.

extreme penalty of the law, but merely required of foreigners that they should deliver up the opium they had already in store, prepared to be smuggled.

All these warnings were disregarded. The efforts of a few right-minded merchants, (most conspicuous among whom we may name, with pride, Mr. King, an American merchant,) to induce a voluntary abandonment of the trade, were equally unavailing. And, as a last and only resort, the Chinese Commissioner seized upon the opium thus stored, amounting to 20,283 chests; about one-third of which had been supplied by the East India Company.

And now the British Government demands of the Chinese Empire indemnity for the property thus seized. I will venture to say that this is the first instance in the annals of civilization, (if not the first, it is to be hoped it will be the last,) in which indemnity for smugglers has been demanded at the cannon's mouth.

So far were the British merchants from exhibiting any disposition to abandon this illicit trade, that a Mr. Piddington, a merchant of Bombay, since promoted to a high office in Asia, submitted to the Chamber of Commerce a plan, which has since been published, apparently by their sanction, to form *entrepôts* for opium at different places, within so short a distance of the Chinese coast, though not within its territories, that small boats as well as larger vessels, could safely run over; and the British Superintendent sent to the Governor of Canton, not an acknowledgment of the warning, but a remonstrance against the outrage which his feelings had suffered, by the execution of criminals in the vicinity of his quarters.

The High Commissioner Linn arrived in Canton on March 10, 1839, with absolute power, and especially commissioned "to settle the affairs of the outer frontier."

His proclamation warned the foreigners to "fear the laws, and in seeking profit to do no harm to others," and asks, "Why do you bring to our land the opium which in your own land is not made use of: by it, depriving men of their property and causing injury to their lives?" And he tells them, "Having come into the territory of the Celestial court, you should pay obedience to its laws equally with the natives of the land." And he declares, "should I search closely into the offences of these foreigners, in forcing for a number of years the sale of opium, they would be found already beyond the bounds of indulgence. But reflecting that they are men from distant lands, and that they have not before been aware that the prohibition of opium is so severe, I cannot bear to cut them off without

instructive monition." He therefore demands that the opium, (and he says he has ascertained that "there are stored up several times 10,000 chests,") shall be delivered up, and the merchants enter into a written promise to smuggle no more. The foreign merchants not readily complying with this edict, an embargo was laid upon the port of Canton and foreigners were forbidden to leave. Being thus prisoners, at the entreaty of the Hong merchants, 1073 chests were delivered up to the government, under protest against these coercive measures. The British superintendent, on the 23d March, issued his proclamation, saying that he was "without confidence in the justice and moderation of the provincial government," because, among other things, "of a public execution before the factories at Canton," and of the "threatening language of the High Commissioner," and advising all her majesty's subjects to make immediate preparations for moving their property. In the mean time, the foreigners were surrounded by a strong native force.

On the 26th of March, Captain Elliott issued a proclamation, that he had received the commands of the High Commissioner to deliver over into his hands all the opium held by the people of his country, and he required all her majesty's subjects then present in Canton forthwith to make a surrender to him, *for the service of her Majesty's government*, to be delivered over to the government of China, of all the opium under their respective control, and declared himself responsible in behalf of his government for all that might be so delivered up. Every British subject complied with this requisition, and the quantity surrendered was 20,283 chests from about fifty ships. On the 25th March, the foreign merchants transmitted to the High Commissioners their pledge not to deal in opium nor attempt to introduce it into the Chinese Empire. But the British superintendent refused to give any such pledge.

On the 28th, the French, Americans and Danish were required to deliver up their opium.

On the 1st April, Captain Elliott published a notice that arrangements had been made for delivering up the opium; that upon delivering one-fourth, their servants who had been taken from them would be restored, the passage boats be permitted to run after one-half should be delivered, the trade be opened after three-fourths delivered, and "every thing to proceed as usual" after the delivery of the whole.

All the opium was delivered during the early part of April, and the British merchants withdrew from Canton to Macao; yet not-

withstanding their pledges, shipments of opium at Bombay and Calcutta still went on. On the 8th of April, boats were permitted to run. On the 25th May, the guard was taken off and all were free, except the hostages. On the 11th of May, Captain Elliott issued peremptory orders to all captains not to deliver opium on any pretence, except to the Commissioner, and again warned his countrymen to make preparations to quit Canton. On the same day an edict was issued by the Chinese government warning all who brought opium of their liability to confiscation and death, and concludes, "say not that it was not told before hand." On the 23d of May, ten of the hostages were set at liberty, by an edict which declared that they had all been habitually accustomed to deal in opium, and directed them to leave the country and never return. On the same day an address from certain British merchants trading at Canton, to Lord Palmerston, was promulgated, in which they complain of the conduct of the Chinese Government, and proclaim thus to the British Government, that their contraband trade had increased from 4,100 chests, in 1796, to upward of 30,000 chests, in 1837. They admit their knowledge of China's prohibitory laws, and claim indemnity because, as they allege, "British subjects have carried on the trade with the sanction, implied if not openly expressed, of their own government, and at the same time with an advantage to the revenue of British India, varying, of late years, from £1,000,000, to £1,500,000 sterling."

Our countryman, Mr. King, who is sneeringly called in the British publications, "the American anti-smuggling merchant," witnessed the destruction of the opium. Three vats of perhaps 75 by 150 feet each were made, into which it was thrown and mixed up with unslacked lime and rock salt, until it became a fetid mud, when sluices were opened and the vats emptied into the river. The work was faithfully performed, and naturally excited in his mind the wonder "that while Christian Governments were growing and farming this deleterious drug, this Pagan monarch should nobly disdain to enrich his treasury with a sale which could not fall short of \$20,000,000."

In the early part of June, Capt. Elliott applied for permission for the British merchants to conduct their business at Macao, which was refused him. And in the time between the surrender of the opium and the liberation of the foreign merchants, a renewed and vigorous prosecution of the opium trade along the Eastern shore, in armed vessels was, carried on.

In July, the Imperial Commissioners addressed a letter to the Queen of England, in order to engage her Government to coöperate with that of China, in preventing the growth of opium, and its introduction into that country, "as we of the central land," says the letter, "prohibit our people from using it, so it seems just; that you prohibit the subjects of your honorable country from preparing it." How like an uncivilized barbarian, did he reason! What! Ask the monarch of a Christian people, to arrest a trade which produced to her subjects a clear profit of ten or fifteen million dollars a year, and to her East India Company, an annual revenue of from five to seven millions, merely for the purpose of saving from destruction a few thousands of unbaptised pagans! What lamentable ignorance! What shocking effrontery!

On the 7th July, a party of British sailors, made an unprovoked attack upon a small village of unoffending Chinese, broke into several houses in quest of spirits, assaulted the inhabitants indiscriminately, killed one man, and desperately wounded many of both sexes, including children and women seventy years of age.

On the 20th July, the contraband trade still going on, an armed smuggler fired into some Chinese junks, on the preventive service, and killed 50 of their people.

The Commissioner having demanded the surrender of the perpetrators of the murder of the 7th July, and been refused, he on the 2d August, issued an edict, reciting the facts, setting forth instances in which such a demand by the British, on the Chinese authorities had been granted, and forbid the boats to supply the English ships with provisions, and the shop people to have dealings with them until the murderers should be delivered up.

On the 17th of August, some Chinese attacked a passage schooner and shockingly mangled an English passenger.

On the 12th of August, Capt. Elliott had what he called "an impartial trial" of the perpetrators of the July outrage. No Chinese were called as witnesses, and none of the accused were found guilty of the *murder*: five were convicted of a *riot*, and sentenced, two of them to three months imprisonment and a fine of 15*l.*, and three of them to six months' imprisonment and a fine of 20*l.*!

On the 26th of August, in consequence of the refusal to surrender the murderers, the English were driven out of Macao at twelve hours' notice.

On the 4th of September, Captain Elliott, in his cutter, accompa-

nied by a schooner, fired on some junks, because they interfered to prevent his being supplied with provisions, which he was seeking in violation of Chinese laws. He ordered up the frigate Volage to his aid, and after a sharp action, the British were driven off.

"Notwithstanding these interruptions," says a private letter, "business to a very great extent in opium is carried on here in a private way, by deliveries outside, in the several islands, at a lucrative rate."

Various other events thenceforth occurred between the people of these two nations, still further widening the breach between them; but which the limits of this address will not permit me to detail. Among them, however, was one, which may be regarded as a fair illustration of the conduct of the British superintendent. When the murder in July was perpetrated, he offered \$2000 to the relatives of the deceased, which he called a compensation to them for their loss, but which the Chinese stigmatized as a bribe to suppress investigation. On the 15th of September, a young English lad went on shore, and in a few days was found floating in the river with marks of strangulation on him. "Advantage was taken of this occurrence by the superintendent to delude the Chinese authorities into a belief that the deceased was the sailor charged with the murder!" The letter, in which this unworthy attempt was made, was returned to him as "useless."

On the 7th November, hostilities actually commenced between the British ships and about thirty Chinese war junks, five or six of which were blown up, and five or six hundred Chinese killed. On the 13th the Chinese batteries fired upon the English shipping at Hong Kong, but without doing any damage. During all this time, the trade was going on, leading to frequent collisions between the Chinese and armed smugglers, and the frequent loss of life; and during the same time an English vessel was cast away on the coast of China. Its crew were treated with the greatest kindness and dismissed with presents of provisions.

On the 5th of January, 1840, the Chinese edict was issued, declaring the English to be outlawed, ordering the trade with them to be entirely stopped, and threatening the severest punishment to any other people who conveyed or disposed of English goods.

On the 8th of January, the commander of the English naval forces announced his intention of blockading the river and port of Canton, unless a merchant of the name of Gribble should be released from captivity by the Chinese. This Mr. Gribble was taken

with arms in his hands, while in the act of open violation of Chinese laws, and, in imitation of the example of the British superintendent, had fired upon the Mandarin boats while in the execution of their duty ; for this he was held in custody, but allowed competent attendance, and treated every way kindly. On the Chinese territory he had violated their laws, and was detained to answer for it. Yet the British forces threatened violence if he was not immediately released from a responsibility which is acknowledged in every civilized community, and which is essential to the very existence of Government.

I have thus traced the origin of the present war between China and England, briefly, it is true, but I hope in a manner sufficiently distinct, to enable my hearers fully to comprehend it. From this history, they will have observed the spirit of mildness and forbearance which has marked the whole conduct of the Chinese Government. With a clearly recognised right, without warning, to seize upon the contraband property, and punish the offenders, they omitted to do so, until their repeated warnings—continued through a long period of time—were not only disregarded, but actually laughed to scorn ; and when they did act, it was not by inflicting personal suffering upon the transgressors, nor by filling their own coffers with the avails of the forfeited article, but by destroying the poison which was working the certain destruction of the lives and happiness of their people.

They will also have observed, that the British merchants persisted in the trade, in defiance of all warnings, in open violation of laws well known to them : in their own language, by the implied, if not the express sanction of their own Government, to the great augmentation of their own gains, and the great increase of the revenue of their own East India Company : that when bribery of Chinese officers lost its effect, force was resorted to, without hesitation, and the lives of the Chinese freely sacrificed to the continuance of the trade, and that the high officers of the English Government, instead of attempting to arrest what they knew to be an illicit traffic, by their various acts, gave to it a national character, protected the persons engaged in it, and set the first example of firing upon the Chinese officers in the lawful discharge of their duties.

It will also be observed, that while all Christian nations are strict in the enforcement of the revenue laws, mainly for the sake of revenue, the Pagan Government of China, regardless of the revenue it might have derived from the importation of opium, and of the im-

mense sum it might have obtained from the sale, instead of the destruction of the forfeited property, enforced their laws for the sole purpose of saving their people from the baneful effects of a most destructive and insidious poison.

It would lengthen this lecture, already too extended, to enter into as minute a detail of the operations of the respective governments since the commencement of hostilities. I shall therefore hasten to a close, and dwell only for a moment upon the subsequent events.

In June, 1840, several British ships of war, with transports containing troops, arrived from the British East Indies, in the Chinese seas. The blockade of Canton was declared on the 28th of that month.

On the 5th day of July, the Island of Chusan was captured by the British forces, with very little bloodshed to them, but the sailors "plundered the town on the beach. In a short time they reduced it to a complete wreck, wantonly destroying what they could not carry off." One account says, "The troops were landed, the British flag hoisted, and a more complete pillage could not be conceived, than then took place." The British General, in his dispatches, says, that "every protection was given to life and property." Yet I will continue my extract from the account of an eye witness, that we may see, once for all, what is to be the fate of the Chinese for venturing the attempt to arrest their own destruction by a fatal drug. The account proceeds—"Every house was indiscriminately broken open, every drawer and box ransacked, the streets strewed with fragments of furniture, pictures, chairs, tables, grain of all sorts, &c. &c., and the whole set off by (but) the dead or living bodies of the inhabitants, who had been unable to leave their city from the wounds received from our merciless guns. Some were lying with one leg shot off—others with two; some with awful wounds from thirty-two pound shots passing through their bodies; and others with legs from which the bones had been partly shot out by grape and cannister. For two days the bodies were allowed to lay, exposed to sight, where they fell. The plunder, however, was carried to an extreme, that is to say, did not cease till there was nothing else to take, and the plunderers will no doubt be able, on our return to Calcutta, to place at their friends disposal, and for the ornamenting of their houses, trophies gained, not from Chinese soldiers, or from a field of battle, but from the harmless and peaceable inhabitants and tradesmen of a city doomed to destruction by our men of war, who a few days previous issued a very strict order to all the transports to

use forbearance toward all the natives, in our dealings with them, as we did not war with the people, but required reparation at the hands of the Chinese Government." "When Tinghae, the principal city in Chusan, was taken possession of, on the 6th, the following appeal to us was posted on the gates, in the Chinese language, "*Spare the living.*"*

At later dates, "the people were some of them returning slowly to town; but when they arrive and see their plundered and devastated houses, they stand thunderstruck, and in some instances fall down, crying like children, at their *entire misery and destitution.*"

After several skirmishes, resulting, however, in great loss of life to the Chinese, it was announced on the 29th of November, that a treaty would be ratified at Canton, and Chusan not be delivered up till three millions sterling were paid to British subjects as compensation, and for the expenses of the war.

After some time spent in fruitless negotiations, the British fleet on the 7th and 8th of January, 1841, attacked and destroyed two forts in the entrance to the port of Canton.

On the 20th of January, it was announced by Capt. Elliott that preliminary arrangements had been made, whereby the island and harbor of Hong Kong were ceded to the British; \$6,000,000 paid to the British government, direct official intercourse between the nations on an equal footing established, and the trade at Canton be re-opened, and the English to restore Chusan.

Under this arrangement the British took possession of Hong Kong, and erected buildings upon it; but the Emperor refusing to ratify the treaty, no other part of it was carried into effect, and hostilities were resumed, the British having, however, obtained one object—possession of a portion of the Chinese territory.

During the month of March, the British forces with very little opposition, and with no less to themselves, but with the loss of several hundred Chinese lives, attacked, captured, and destroyed all the forts which defended the entrance to the harbor of Canton, and on the 20th of the month, in the language of the dispatches, Canton "lay at British mercy, and remains a memento of British for-

* The regiments most conspicuous in this affair, were afterwards complimented by being permitted to inscribe the word "China" on their banner, in commemoration, doubtless, as well of the bravery displayed in conquering a few hundred timid and undisciplined Chinese soldiers, as of the care manifested by them in the "protection given to life and property."

bearance." The city was not then destroyed nor given up to pillage, but an armistice was agreed upon with the provincial government, and the trade of Canton declared to be open. The Emperor, however, refused to ratify the armistice, and ordered the war to go on, declaring in his edict that the British had debauched men's wives and daughters, made captives, carried away property, built forts, &c. &c.

In May, no permanent arrangements having been made, and the British having received re-inforcements from their Indian possessions, they made their final attack upon Canton, which resulted, after the destruction of some 5,000 Chinese lives, in the capitulation of the city: and a demand, which was yielded to, that the Chinese should pay to the British Government \$5,000,000 as a ransom for the city, and send their troops sixty miles into the interior. Whether in this attack the scenes of Chusan were reenacted, can be learned from the report of the Chinese Commissioner, which declares, that their enemy "attacked and laid in ruins the frontiers, and, from the profligacy of their dispositions, abandoned themselves to lewdness and robbery, dug up the graves, burned and laid in ruins the fields and huts, and children of three cubits in height have not escaped a loss of chastity and defilement of their persons." "Myriads of people were weeping and wailing, and the number of those who invoked Heaven and begged for peace, covered the roads;" while, on the other hand, the British dispatches declare that "they have twice spared the city and the trade, and that the people owe the safety of their lives and property to the forbearance of the British officers."

Our last accounts are to the 29th of July last, at which time the Chinese had paid the ransom of Canton, and the British were sending off their spoils.

Such is the origin and progress of the war between Great Britain and China. The result cannot long be doubtful; the triumph of the disciplined troops of the former over the timid hordes of the latter seems thus far to have been complete. Whether China is to share the fate of British India, or whether British "forbearance" will arrest what her writers call "the music of her thirty-two pounders," short of the entire destruction of the Chinese empire, we cannot know, though if we may judge from the past, it may not be difficult to divine.

In the mean time, in order to form a just opinion of the contest,

we must not be unmindful of the demands of the respective parties, nor overlook their pretensions.

The whole opium trade with the Chinese was contraband, and known to be such to the merchants engaged in it, and to the officers of the foreign governments stationed at Canton. Most of the traders were British subjects, and the traffic was carried to such an extent, that they were characterized before a Committee of the House of Commons, as early as 1834, as being "all smugglers." The surrender of the opium was enforced by making prisoners of all the English at Canton, that is, they were confined to their quarters, and surrounded by Chinese soldiers; but in no otherwise ill-treated, except that their Chinese servants were taken away from them. The representative of the British Government was not one of those thus imprisoned. He came afterward and voluntarily shared the duress of his countrymen; and instead of leaving the smugglers to suffer, by the confiscation of their property, the just consequences of their open violation of Chinese laws, he demanded the opium of them, in behalf of her Majesty's Government, and in its name surrendered it to the native authorities. He thus gave the transaction a national character, and threw around these avowed transgressors of the law, the shield of the national name.

Nor has his conduct in giving it this character ever been disavowed by his government. But on the contrary, on his demand, the British forces in the Chinese seas were immediately réenforced. The Queen in her speech from the throne, on proroguing Parliament on the 11th of August, 1840, declared that "The violent injuries inflicted upon some of my subjects by the officers of the Emperor of China, and the indignities offered to an agent of my crown, have compelled me to send to the coast of China a naval and military force, for the purpose of demanding reparation and redress." In the House of Commons, on the 27th of July, 1840, on a vote for the expenses of an expedition to China, one of the members denounced the war, and declared that "the whole proposition of the advocates for war resolved itself into this—that the British had a right to smuggle opium, and that the Chinese had no business to prevent it." In reply, the British Ministers admitted that "there was no objection, undoubtedly, to the confiscation of contraband articles, but it must not be effected by seizure of persons. The residents were not only arrested, but menaced with starvation, which had been averted only by the surrender of the property." Sir Robert Peel, then in the minority, "condemned the conduct of the Chi-

nese, but he believed the evil had been mainly produced by the want of fit instructions from the British Government to Captain Elliott. Lord Palmerston had denounced the principle of seizure, made on one party to force some concession from another. Yet that was the very principle which this administration had lately adopted upon the sulphur question, and which other governments, on many occasions, might fitly pursue.”*

The “violent injuries” spoken of in the speech from the throne, could not then be the seizure and destruction of the opium, for that was admitted by the ministry, to be without objection. It was the seizure of the persons of a few residents, who were all supposed to be equally guilty, or rather their confinement to their own quarters for a few days, which is to be attended with such serious consequences. And as to the indignities offered to an agent of the crown none can be discovered, in the history of the whole difficulty, except that he was permitted to intrude himself among the residents while thus confined, and voluntarily to share the restraint imposed upon them.

For these “injuries” and “indignities” the British Government demands, not remuneration to the residents for their imprisonment, nor apology for an insult to the British Agent, but,

1st. Indemnity for the opium destroyed, to which destruction there was not, in the opinion of the British ministry, any objection ;

* “Hence we find that England’s gains from its East India possessions amount to no less than 6,500,000 pounds sterling a year—a sum which would in the end completely ruin this Colony, (or more properly speaking, drain it of its bullion,) if it were remitted in that form, but such is not the case: it comes to England in the following manner: East India opium is sent to China, and is there exchanged for tea, this is taken to England and covers all the bills of exchange.”—*The British Empire in the East by Count Bjornstjerna.*

“Strictly speaking the whole trade with India rests at present on a highly immoral basis, or 15,000 or 20,000 chests of opium of the value of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 sterling, with which the Chinese are every year poisoned. Thus, a country which had for thousands of years, accumulated the gold of the world, which is destined by nature to bear the finest fruits and the dearest spices which contribute to the enjoyment and the refreshment of man, has been compelled in our days to bear a noxious drug, which spreads physical and moral debility among the millions of inhabitants of the “Celestial Empire.” The juice of the poppy is now, in fact, the staple of India, which, together with silk and indigo, alone enables that country to purchase the conveniencies and luxuries of Europe.—*Ibid.*

2d. Indemnity for the expenses of the war, undertaken for the purpose of demanding reparation and redress for injuries and indignities, which are never once alluded to in any of the negotiations :

3d. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries upon an equal footing :

4th. The cession to her, of a portion of Chinese territory, whether for the purposes of lawful trade, or for the establishment of those *entrepôts* for smuggling which found so much favor with the Chamber of Commerce at Bombay, is not mentioned :

5th. And the opening of the ports of China to the trade of Europe.

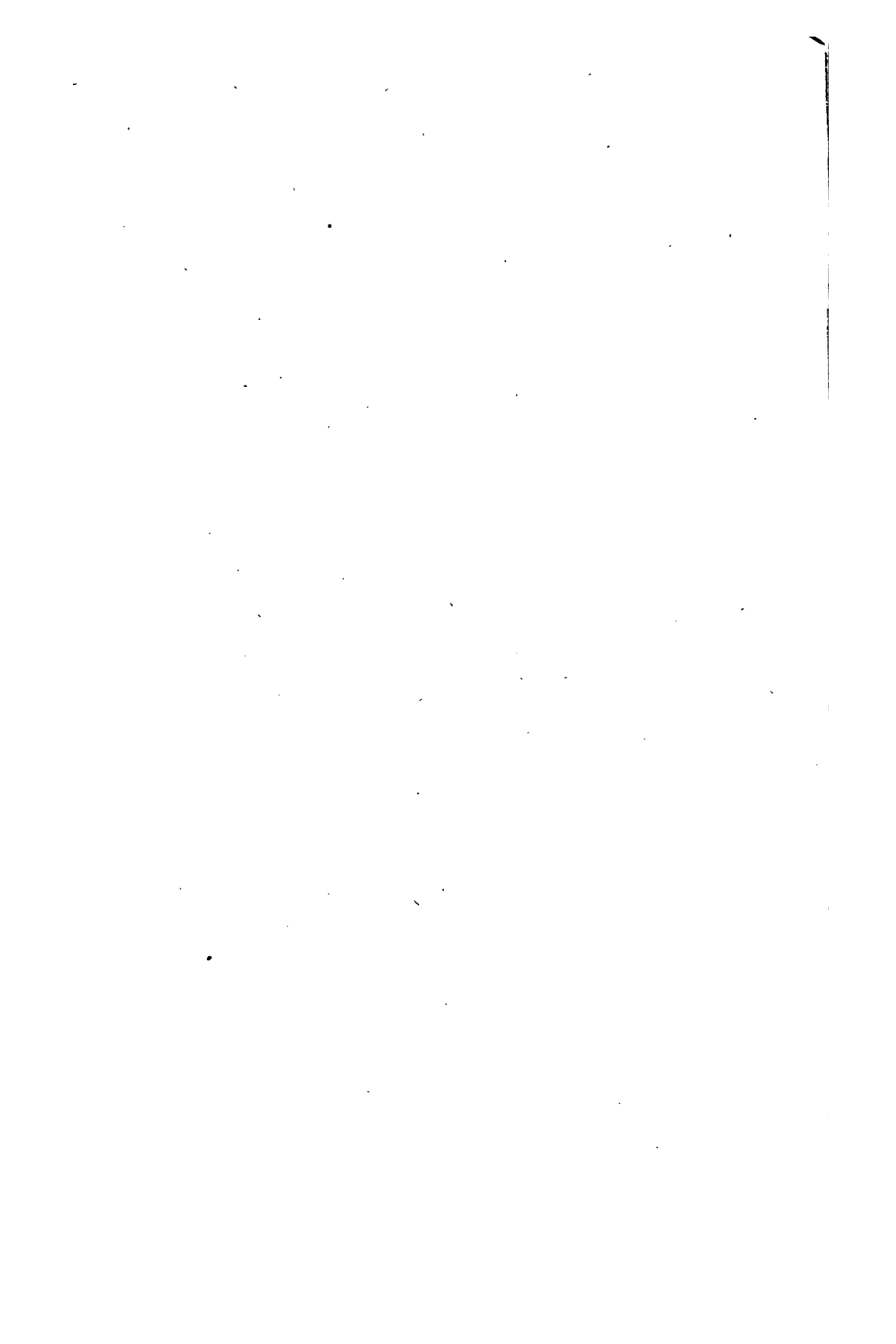
Having thus learned the claims of one party, from their own language, let us resort to a similar source, for the disposition of the other. An edict of the Chinese Emperor says ; " our dynasty has been soothing and indulgent to outside foreigners, and favor and justice were shown to all. If the said foreigners could indeed have been respectful and obedient, I should have treated them with increased kindness, and then all might have hoped for joy and tranquility. Before, because the flowing poison of the occidental countries daily increased, I issued special orders that endeavors should be made to wean the people from the stupid habit ; but the English, depending on their boisterous strength, would not submit to give the voluntary bond ; in consequence I ordered their trade to be entirely cut off : but even now they are unrepentant, and their profligacy daily increases, like the *chebird*, (a bird of prey.) Since the domineering pride of those rebellious foreigners has at length arrived at this pitch, it will not be difficult to arrange our battalia, and exterminate and drive out the whole number. But on account of considering that the said foreigners presented an address, in which they state their grievances, I could not but cause them to be investigated, in order to manifest the great principles of justice, and I especially ordered the Cabinet Minister, Keshen, to proceed with haste to Canton, to examine into the facts and manage the business." " After Keshen arrived in Canton, he well understood to open up and induce to the paths of rectitude, but the insatiable desires of the English could not be satisfied : already are their thoughts dwelling upon extorting the price of their opium. Further, they are again requesting I should grant them a landing place, (territory.)"

Such is the position of the parties to this contest. Canton has bought its exemption from pillage, by a subsidy of \$6,000,000, but the armistice has been declared to extend only to the Southern

Province, and the new British Plenipotentiary has proceeded north-erly along the coast, with the large mass of the British forces, for the avowed purpose of enforcing more energetically, his country's demands. In the meantime, the opium trade goes on, and while "the music of England's 32 pounders" is proclaiming the death of thousands who perish in defence of their country and its laws, her armed smugglers are swarming upon the coast, and in defiance of all law, forcing their deadly drug upon the devoted people.

When, in the dark ages, Europe sent her countless hordes into Asia, to plunder and destroy, it was in the name of a Holy Crusade and for the declared purpose of opening a passage for the pious pilgrim to the tomb of his Saviour. When the white man first came to these shores, and began those aggressions which have swept the natives from the land which they once trod as undisputed owners, it was under the pretence of seeking an asylum from religious persecution; and even the wholesale robberies and butcheries of Cortes and Pizarro were perpetrated in the name of a holy religion, and with the avowed object of propagating its tenets. In all these instances, a decent respect for the opinion of mankind, extorted from the actors, at least, fair-seeming pretexts for their conduct. But we must do England the justice to acknowledge, that in her war with China, she resorts to no hypocritical pretences. She boldly avows that her object is the acquisition of Chinese territory, and indemnity to her people, for violating Chinese laws. How far her demands comport with the eternal principles of justice, it cannot be difficult to determine.

But let us not be misled by the intimation that the spread of civilization demands this contest. Let us not forget, that, in most of the arts of civilization, the Chinese are our equals, and in its virtues of mildness, forbearance, and love of peace, they are our superiors. And, above all, let us beware, lest civilization be given to them "in its strength, rather than in its mercy."







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